

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE  
Transcriber's Office  
FLOOR DEBATE

May 14, 2003

LB 407

state colleges by about \$917,000, a little less than...or a little over \$450,000 for each of the two fiscal years, and for community colleges it would be a \$1.6 million reduction, about a little over \$800,000 for each of those two years. So the total impact is a minus \$33 million. Together, with the reduction of Senator Raikes yesterday on the tobacco smoking program of \$6 million, that would total a \$39 million reduction if this were adopted together with Senator Raikes' prior amendment. And I guess the question is, why do we do this? Obviously, I think we're looking for ways to bring this together. We had...I thought we had excellent debate yesterday. We each might have our own opinion about whether it's productive when we actually pass something or don't pass something, but in this process we have to go through, especially on a tough budget like this, I think we've got to go through significant debate and consideration of many ideas. I think the idea that we've got to probably do some more carving in higher education, and also in K-12 is a conclusion that I have come to, there might be some that would like to go more than this and I think Senator Wehrbein has an amendment that would do more than this, and some probably don't want to do this much. But in an effort to work at this and get it carved down some more, this is an idea that I present to you. I hope that there are others who will be supportive of at least going this far. I would also like to respond maybe just a little bit out of context here, but it all is related to the budget. I was up pretty early this morning and, of course, I knew that there would be a considerable reaction to the work last night on Senator Dwite Pedersen's amendment, but I was surprised, I guess, to see some of the comments that the Governor had with regard to the Appropriations Committee and the work that we're trying to do here. I think that we all have the same goal in mind, and that is to do whatever it takes and whatever is responsible, to bring this budget together and to tax the people the least amount possible while continuing to provide the kind of help to citizens that can't help themselves, and the kind of educational system that has made this state what it is today. And that is in all of our hearts, and so I think it's unfair to presume anything else. And to say that the Appropriations Committee has been breaking arms and stifling discussion is an absolute incorrect statement. They have a right and a responsibility to stand up for their